

Please cite the Published Version

Lees, Alexander (2011) Book Review: Birds of Brazil: The Pantanal and Cerrado of Central Brazil. IBIS: The International Journal of Avian Science, 153 (4). pp. 902-903. ISSN 0019-1019

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1474-919X.2011.01168.x>

Publisher: Wiley

Version: Accepted Version

Downloaded from: <https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/633672/>

Usage rights: © In Copyright

Additional Information: This is a book review of Gwynne, J.A., Ridgely, R.S., Tudor, G. & Argel, M. Birds of Brazil: The Pantanal and Cerrado of Central Brazil, ISBN 978-0-8014-4919-2, which has been published in final form at <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1474-919X.2011.01168.x>. This book review article may be used for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Wiley Terms and Conditions for Use of Self-Archived Versions. This article may not be enhanced, enriched or otherwise transformed into a derivative work, without express permission from Wiley or by statutory rights under applicable legislation. Copyright notices must not be removed, obscured or modified. The article must be linked to Wiley's version of record on Wiley Online Library and any embedding, framing or otherwise making available the article or pages thereof by third parties from platforms, services and websites other than Wiley Online Library must be prohibited.

Enquiries:

If you have questions about this document, contact openresearch@mmu.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in e-space. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our Take Down policy (available from <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/library/using-the-library/policies-and-guidelines>)

Gwynne, J.A., Ridgely, R.S., Tudor, G. & Argel, M . Birds of Brazil: The Pantanal and Cerrado of Central Brazil . 322 pages, 663 colour illustrations, 749 colour maps, 33 colour photographs . Ithaca, NY : Cornell University Press , 2010 . Paperback, US\$35.00, £22.95, ISBN 978-0-8014-7646-4 ; hardback, US\$75.00, £46.95, ISBN 978-0-8014-4919-2 . Website: <http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu> .

The last few years have seen an influx of ‘pretenders to the throne’ for the title of the field guide to Brazil and the latest to land on my doormat has taken a rather different approach from other recent contenders. Gwynne et al. have split the Brazilian avifauna by region and their first book in a Wildlife Conservation Society series of five covers the vast Pantanal wetland and Cerrado biomes of central southern Brazil. The guide uses Guy Tudor’s illustrations of passerines from his preceding books with Bob Ridgely in conjunction with work by seven other artists. Given that field guides are invariably best judged by their plates, I am happy to report that the standard of the new plates (Guy Tudor’s still stand the test of time) is generally high, although still falling below the standards set by the new ‘benchmark’ South American field guide –Birds of Peru (Schulenberg et al. 2007; see Ibis151: 417–418). Many species are represented by a single illustration, although some sexually dimorphic species are afforded two. The accompanying text is concise and appropriate, focusing on the description (including confusion species), with additional information on vocalizations, habitat preferences, and distinctive behaviours. The range maps are excellent and indicate when species are either austral or boreal migrants/vagrants, and they include extralimital records, although it is a shame that the distribution was not extended beyond the limits of the biome.

Coverage is pretty good at 743 species; skimming through, I found little evidence of species being totally omitted, although Zimmer’s Tody-Tyrant *Hemitriccus minimus* does spring to mind. The book does suffer from the fact that over 75 species are not illustrated. Admittedly, many of these are peri-Amazonian or peri-Atlantic Forest species that do not form part of the core avifauna of the biome in question, but the list of unillustrated species does include some endemics to the region such as Chapada Suiriri [Chapada Flycatcher] *Suiriri islerorum*, which I would have liked to see included. Another minor problem is the failure to use a consistent taxonomy and nomenclature, so that several English, Portuguese and Latin names do not follow either the lists of the South American Classifications Committee (SACC) or the Comitê Brasileiro de Registros Ornitológicos (CBRO). The number of species and amount of information included obviously has to be balanced against the portability of a field guide and this book is certainly portable and slim enough to fit in a coat pocket (bearing in mind that coat-use in these biomes in the austral summer is likely to be restricted to the early morning before the temperature soars into the 30s!).

The book’s first 29 pages provide an introduction to the two biomes and the threats to their integrity with a number of colour photographs and illustrations of the birds and their habitats. Unlike the two forested biomes either side of the region, the plight of the Cerrado has received considerably less international press coverage, this despite high rates of endemism and massive rates of habitat loss and conversion. Key to biodiversity conservation in Brazil is fostering biophilia, and a lack of decent affordable field guides has been a major block to the popularization of birdwatching in the country. In recent weeks, I have seen this book’s Portuguese-language version available for sale in Brasilia airport and at the Brazilian Ornithology Congress in Cuiaba, both of which were apparently doing a

brisk trade with this subsidized edition. This book, coupled with online resources such as <http://www.wikiaves.com.br>, offers renewed hope to spur on a fledgling environmental ethic at a time of massive drawing down of the region's environmental capital. After all, how can one convince a person of the importance of saving Crowned Solitary Eagle *Harpyhaliaetus coronatus* who has never noticed a Roadside Hawk *Buteo magnirostris*. More copies of *Birds of Brazil* in circulation will, I hope, redress that balance.

Alexander C. Lees